

MANAGING FOR OSPREYS



Photo Credit: Helena Auyang

Ospreys often cause management challenges by nesting on power line poles and other man-made structures, which can put **birds at risk** of electrocution and disturbance, and potentially cause fires and power outages.

With the **cooperation of many partners** including Mountain Parks Electric Inc., Western Area Power Administration, and Colorado Parks & Wildlife, the Arapaho National Recreation Area is dedicated to providing ospreys with safe nesting opportunities. All of the platform structures you observe on this tour are the result of successful mitigations of this hazardous situation.

Closure areas are often posted close to active nest sites to limit potential disturbance to nesting ospreys. Please observe these closures as they are an important component of our successful osprey conservation efforts.

BIRDING ETHICS

Please respect birds by keeping an appropriate distance from active nests, staying on marked trails and avoiding closed areas. To avoid disturbing nesting birds, keep conversations to a minimum and avoid making loud noises. View in small groups, respect private property and collect discarded fishing line.

OSPREY FUN FACTS

- Ospreys **primarily eat fish**.
- Ospreys hunt by hovering over water and then **diving feet first** to grab prey in their talons.
- Barbed pads on the birds' feet and a reversible toe help them **grip slippery fish**.
- While flying with its catch, an osprey will **turn the fish head-first** so that it is aerodynamic.
- Ospreys are found on **every continent** except Antarctica.
- Ospreys can live **25-30 years**.
- Ospreys usually **mate for life** and often return to the same nest year after year.
- The osprey fossil record goes back to the Miocene (at least **11 million years ago**).
- Osprey nests appear **delicately balanced** in the tops of trees or other structures, often as the highest point.
- Osprey nests can be **quite large** after years of building and reuse.
- Adverse late spring and summer weather (wind or late, heavy snow) influences the **success rate** of local nesting ospreys.
- Ospreys return to the ANRA when the **lake ice breaks up** in May and leave for the season in September.
- Preliminary research by the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Rocky Mountain National Park and U.S. Forest Service found that some ANRA ospreys migrate to central Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico; a flight of 1700 to 1900 miles.
- Note that you may not see ospreys at every nest on every visit on this tour due to breeding dynamics.**

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Discarded **fishing line endangers osprey** survival as birds can become entangled in it as they search for nest material and food.

Ospreys may become entangled since fishing line is difficult to see and can be attached to discarded fish. Adults and chicks may also become entangled in line snagged on sticks gathered for nest building.

Monofilament collection and recycle bins have been installed in many popular fishing areas of the ANRA and are largely run by a local network of volunteers.



Photo Credit: U.S. Forest Service

Use these bins for any line you find. You can **Adopt-a-Bin**. Volunteers help empty the bins and clean up the line for recycling. You can also **Adopt-a-Nest**. Volunteers help by observing nests and reporting breeding activities, which provides valuable information to wildlife managers.

To volunteer, contact the **District Wildlife Biologist** at 970-887-4100.



For more information contact:
USDA Forest Service
Arapaho National Recreation Area
9 Ten Mile Drive
Granby, CO
970-887-4100
www.fs.usda.gov/arp



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Known as **Colorado's Great Lakes**, the Arapaho National Recreation Area (ANRA) provides excellent summer habitat for ospreys, supporting over 50 breeding pairs that can fledge more than 50 chicks per season.

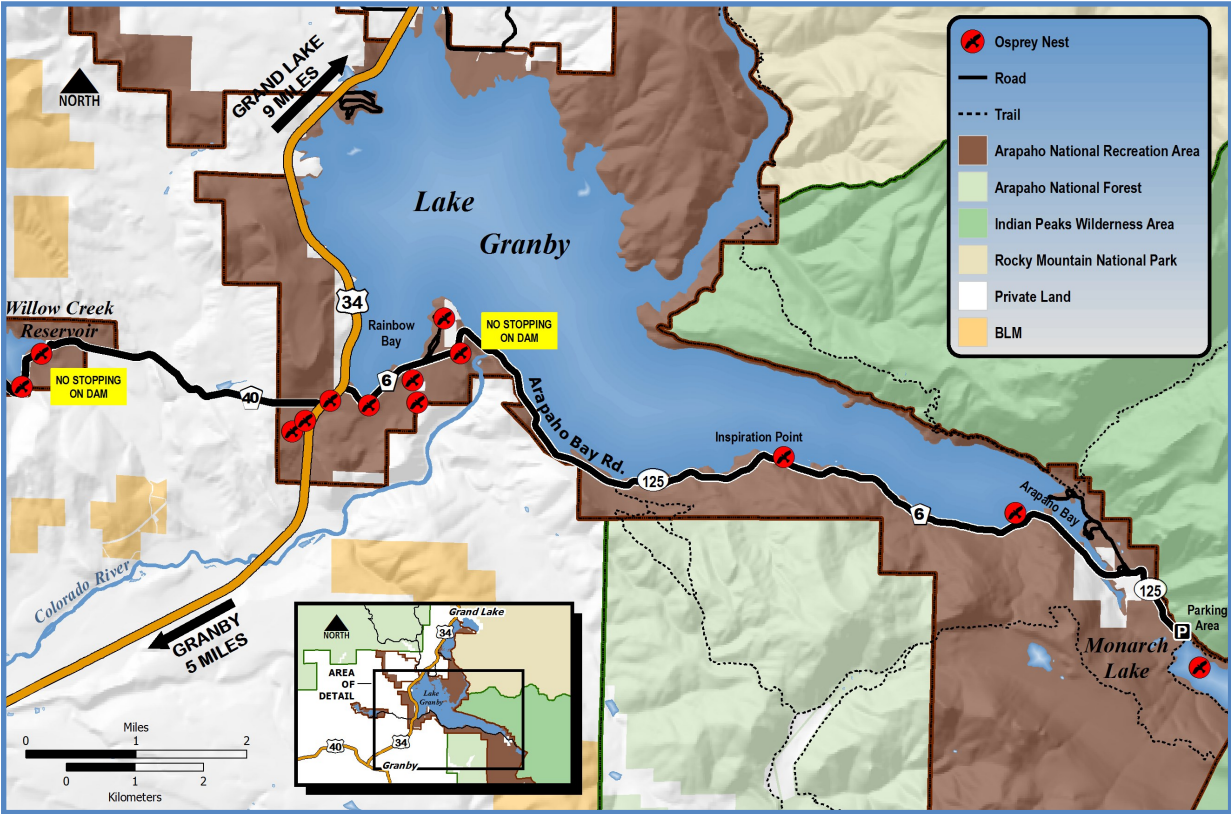
As the **largest breeding population** in the region, ANRA ospreys played an important role in population recovery. Ospreys nearly disappeared from Colorado during the 1960s as pesticide contamination produced eggs with thin, fragile shells that broke during incubation.

Due to their high profile nesting sites and exciting foraging habits, ospreys can be great fun to watch.

Please **take some time to enjoy these tours** by car, bike, kayak or canoe. Don't forget your binoculars!

ARAPAHO BAY DRIVING/BIKING TOUR

Ten osprey nests are easily viewed from the roadside on this tour. From Granby, travel about 5 miles north on U.S. Highway 34 to Arapaho Bay Road (County Road 6 & Forest Service Road 125) or about 9 miles south on U.S. Highway 34 from Grand Lake. At the start of Arapaho Bay Road, refer to the map below. Please note day use fees for this area. To view the Monarch Lake nest, park at the trailhead and take a short trail walk (0.3 miles — no bikes). Use caution when observing nests from the roadside — make sure you are not in the way of traffic and have your flashers on.

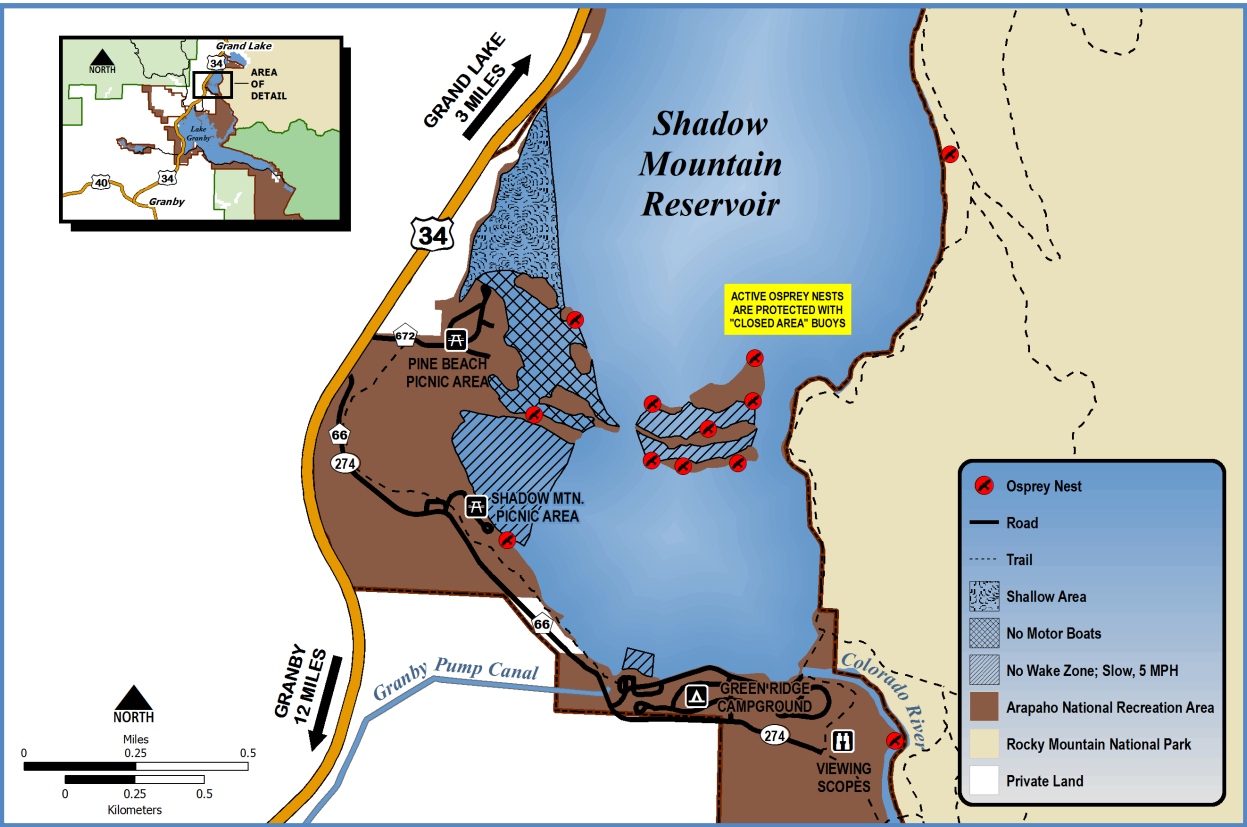


WILLOW CREEK DRIVING/BIKING TOUR

Two osprey nests are easily viewed from the roadside on this tour. To begin, travel about 5 miles north on U.S. Highway 34 from Granby to County Road 40 or about 9 miles south on U.S. Highway 34 from Grand Lake. Drive or bike about 3 miles west on County Road 40 to Willow Creek Reservoir. From here, refer to the map above. Please note day use fees for this area.

SHADOW MOUNTAIN ISLANDS CANOE/KAYAK TOUR

Ten osprey nests are best viewed by canoe or kayak on this tour. To begin, travel about 12 miles north on U.S. Highway 34 from Granby to Green Ridge Road (County Road 66 & Forest Service Road 274) or Pine Beach Road (County Road 672) or about 3 miles south on U.S. Highway 34 from Grand Lake. Canoes/kayaks can be launched at either the Pine Beach or Shadow Mountain Picnic Area. From here, refer to the map below. Day use (with a fee) is encouraged outside of the posted nesting closures but **no overnight camping is allowed**. The islands on Shadow Mountain Reservoir offer excellent nesting and foraging habitat for ospreys because of the shallow water and abundant shoreline of tall mature trees. In addition to ospreys, look for American white pelicans, kingfishers, waterfowl, and river otters. (NOTE: Osprey nests near the Shadow Mountain Picnic Area and Colorado River — which also has viewing scopes — are easily accessed by car.)



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